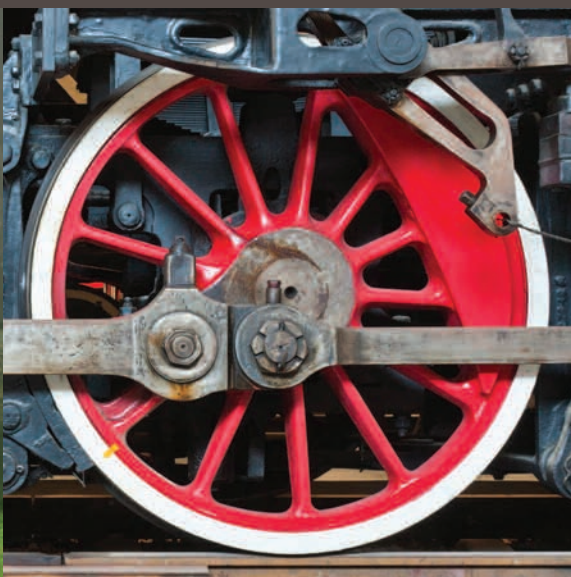




EMPOWERING THE BLACKSTONE VALLEY

JOHN H CHAFEE BLACKSTONE RIVER VALLEY NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR

2010 ANNUAL REPORT



THE WHEEL OF TIME TURNS, AND
AGES COME AND PASS, LEAVING
MEMORIES THAT BECOME LEGEND.
LEGEND FADES TO MYTH, AND EVEN
MYTH IS LONG FORGOTTEN WHEN
THE AGE THAT GAVE IT BIRTH
COMES AGAIN. —ROBERT JORDAN



RISE OF A REGION

THE VITALIZATION—AND RE-VITALIZATION—OF THE BLACKSTONE VALLEY

THE RISE OF THE AMERICAN INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

In 2010, we began our 25th year of preserving and interpreting the unique and compelling story of the Blackstone River Valley. This region is special in many ways: its scenic landscapes, its hardworking river, its historic architecture, its rich cultural diversity. But the most notable distinction of the Blackstone Valley is its place in our nation's history—as the birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution.

Many people know that our story begins with the opening of Samuel Slater's mill in 1790. But those who think that this is also the end of our story miss the point. Revolution is not a singular event. The true revolution occurred when Slater and his imitators repeated the experiment of 1790 again and again, spreading the innovation of water-powered cotton manufacture like a carpet across the Valley.

The revolutionaries reshaped the landscape of the Valley. They erected mill villages where fields and forests once grew. They redirected the waters of the rivers to power the mills. They laid down transportation networks to connect the villages. They lured families from around the world to work in the textile mills, to live in the company houses, and to shop in the company stores.

The revolution then fed back upon itself. Supporting industries grew. Newer technologies evolved. Soon, the Blackstone Valley could not contain the success of the "Rhode Island" style of industrialization. It spread across New England. It spread across the nation. Ultimately, it changed the way people would live and work in this new, industrial age. Its echoes are still heard across the modern American landscape.

THE RISE OF A NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR

Two centuries after Samuel Slater made his mark on the Blackstone River Valley, you can still see the imprint of the industrial revolution on the landscape of the Valley. Mill villages are still intact. Farmscapes are still tended. Historic transportation networks criss-cross the land. And the hard-working Blackstone River still runs along the route that nature, and the early industrialists, engineered for it.

Honoring the national significance and historic integrity of the region, Congress designated the Blackstone River Valley a National Heritage Corridor in 1986. Since then, the Corridor Commission and the National Park Service have been working to preserve the features of the Valley, and to tell its stories, by mobilizing and empowering a region-wide network of partners. As a result, the Blackstone Valley is experiencing a revolution of a different sort. It is a revolution of shared identity, of pride, of achievement, of forward thinking.

Together, we have accomplished a lot in the past 25 years. Our waterways are cleaner. Our historic and natural sites are less vulnerable to destruction. There are more recreational opportunities available. Our children are discovering what makes their hometowns and ancestors special. More citizens are donating their time and talents. And visitors now have central locations for finding out where to go and what to do.

In fact, people all over are beginning to realize what and where the Blackstone Valley is.

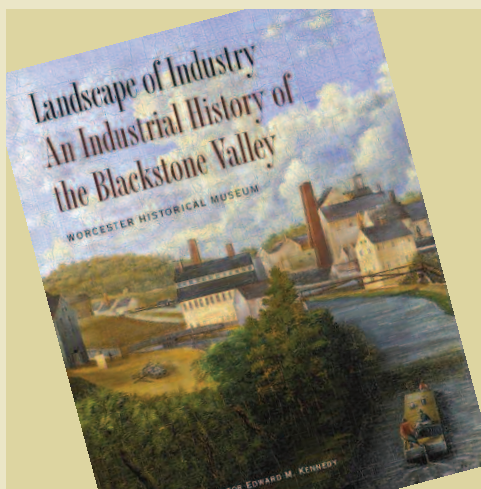


The Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor encompasses 24 Massachusetts and Rhode Island communities along the Blackstone River and its tributaries.

[THE BLACKSTONE RIVER VALLEY NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR] OFFERS A GLIMPSE OF AMERICA AS A YOUNG NATION ON THE WAY TO BECOMING A WORLD POWER, AND IT HONORS THE INGENUITY AND HARD WORK THAT LED US FORWARD. —SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY, FROM THE FOREWORD OF *LANDSCAPE OF INDUSTRY: AN INDUSTRIAL HISTORY OF THE BLACKSTONE VALLEY*



In May 2010, the Corridor launched its new on-line learning program, Blackstone Valley 101. The program allows anyone with a computer to discover the sites and stories that make the Blackstone Valley an integral part of America's heritage. More than 250 people have completed the program, including residents of all 24 cities and towns in the Valley and from 18 other US states. To access Blackstone Valley 101, go to www.nps.gov/blac/supportyourpark/bv101.htm.



Landscape of Industry: An Industrial History of the Blackstone Valley, the first book published on this topic, hit the shelves in late 2009. The richly-illustrated, award-winning volume was funded by the Corridor Commission and collaboratively produced by the Worcester Historical Museum and the National Park Service. It can be found through local and on-line distributors.



The Corridor's *Along the Blackstone* cable television series is now available to public access cable stations nation-wide, thanks to assistance from Wrentham Cable Access. To date, communities from Kansas, Maine, Michigan, Ohio, Texas, Tennessee and Wisconsin have joined folks from Massachusetts and Rhode Island in witnessing the unfolding story of the Blackstone Valley, episode by episode.

VISIT BLACKSTONEVALLEYCORRIDOR.ORG

In 2010, the Corridor developed a new, adaptable internet site to serve as a clearing-house for Blackstone Valley ideas and information. On it, partners from throughout the Valley can tell their stories, post project information, access critical resources and find out the latest news and happenings throughout the region. Visitors to the Valley can find information, maps, and partner links on the site to ensure they get the most out of their time here. The site will also serve as a communication portal for the new not-for-profit Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, Inc. The website can be found at www.blackstonevalleycorridor.org.



GAINING MOMENTUM

A TRACK RECORD OF PROGRESS FOR THE BLACKSTONE VALLEY

PROTECTING OUR IRREPLACEABLE LANDSCAPES

With grants from the Corridor Commission and the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission, five Rhode Island communities—Burrillville, Glocester, Lincoln, North Smithfield, and Smithfield—joined together to conduct a Heritage Landscape Inventory in 2010. Municipal staff, volunteers and residents identified over 260 landscapes that contribute to the unique character of the Blackstone Valley. Farms and open space, both seen as vulnerable to development, were of particular concern, as were rural roads. The communities prioritized 28 landscapes that lack long-term protection and a project team developed strategies for preserving them.

The 2010 Heritage Landscape Inventory followed a 2007 project which identified hundreds of landscapes in ten Valley towns in Massachusetts. Communities have since implemented key recommendations from that project, passing demolition delay bylaws, enacting conservation restrictions, and acquiring land. Reports are posted at www.blackstonevalleycorridor.org/sustainability/place.

EDUCATING OUR COMMUNITIES

In 2010, National Park Service rangers teamed with docents at Slater Mill National Historic Landmark to provide on-site educational programs for over 10,000 students and to present interpretive tours for several thousand public visitors. This partnership dramatically enhanced the Corridor's ability to engage audiences in the story of the Blackstone Valley.

Throughout the Valley, rangers, volunteers and partners delivered a diverse mix of interpretive and educational programs in 2010. This included the Ranger Days lecture series, 14 Ranger Walkabouts, and six Footsteps in History walking tours. Some programs, like the curriculum-linked field trips at the Museum of Work and Culture in Woonsocket, have been part of the Corridor's interpretation and education program for years. Others, like public programs about Abraham Lincoln's visit to Woonsocket during his 1860 campaign, tackled new and compelling aspects of our region's history. For more, visit www.nps.gov/blac/planyourvisit/things2do.htm.

PRESERVING OUR HISTORIC STRUCTURES

The Blackstone Canal Preservation Study—Rhode Island, completed in 2010 in partnership with Preserve Rhode Island, represents an important milestone: the entire length of the 45-mile-long canal has now been mapped. The study inventories canal-related resources and identifies segments of the canal that hold the greatest potential for restoration.

In 2011, the Corridor Commission and the National Park Service will focus on two promising sections of the canal. Along a three-mile segment near River Bend Farm in Massachusetts, engineers will assess the condition of the canal, make restoration recommendations, and determine the feasibility of improving boat access. In Rhode Island, engineers will design a solution for controlling water near the Ashton Dam, a step that is critical to protecting the canal trench, the towpath, and the bike path during high water events. For more, visit www.blackstonevalleycorridor.org/sustainability/place.

IMPROVING OUR WATERWAYS

The Corridor's watershed partners constructed five more river access sites along the Blackstone in 2010. This increases the number of improved access sites to 13, with 26 more desired. Improved access helps

LEFT: A RiverzEdge Arts Project student practices construction skills while helping to build a functioning model of a canal lock.

RIGHT: Consulting engineers and National Park Service staff survey a portion of the historic Blackstone Canal near River Bend Farm in Massachusetts.

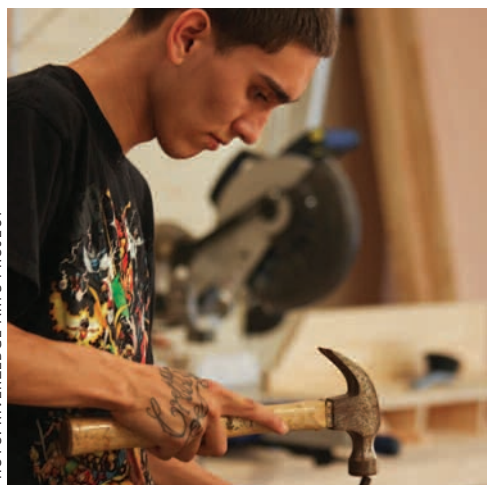


PHOTO: RIVERZEDGE ARTS PROJECT





promote recreational use of the river while reducing bank erosion.

Water quality data collection and analysis continued in 2010, with program funding coming from both the Blackstone River Coalition and the Corridor Commission. The data helps inform pollution-control outreach efforts to residents, businesses, and municipal facilities managers. In addition, watershed organizations spearheaded organized river cleanups in 2010, supported in part with Commission funding. Future river improvement programs include an invasive species awareness program, several targeted cleanups, and the construction of fish ladders. For more, visit www.zaptheblackstone.org.

DEVELOPING OUR VOLUNTEER WORKFORCE

The Corridor's Volunteers-In-Parks program has shown phenomenal growth since its inception in 1993. During that first year, volunteers contributed 220 hours to the National Heritage Corridor. Over the past three years, volunteers have contributed more than 50,000 hours each year; that's over one million dollars worth of donated labor a year. In 2010, the Volunteers-In-Parks program actively worked with 21 different partner organizations to recruit, place, train, and motivate volunteers. At any given time, volunteers could be found welcoming visitors to cultural sites, working to clean up the river, conducting tours, providing guidance on bikes or in canoes, demonstrating historic crafts, and more. The continuance of a strong volunteering ethic in the Blackstone Valley will be vital to the success of partner organizations and to the long-term appreciation and care of the Valley's resources. For more, visit www.blackstonevalleycorridor.org/getinvolved.

CONSTRUCTING OUR BIKEWAY

In October 2010, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts committed \$15 million toward the design and construction of Segment 1 of the Blackstone River Bikeway in Blackstone, MA. Segment 1 had been considered a formidable obstacle as it includes 11 bridges.

Also in October, bike enthusiasts convened at the New England Bike Walk Summit to show support for affordable alternative transportation choices and recreational facilities. The summit generated 90 letters signed by individuals and organizations in support of "The completion of the Blackstone River Bikeway within the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor." Of the proposed 48 mile route, 11.5 miles have been completed in Rhode Island and 2.5 miles have been completed in Massachusetts. For more, visit www.blackstonevalleycorridor.org/explore.

ENGAGING OUR YOUTH

With help from a National Park Service Youth Partnership Program grant, and led by an NPS ranger, 12 teenagers from Woonsocket spent the summer of 2010 building a functional model of a Blackstone Canal lock. The students practiced the skills of sketching, measuring, researching, designing, building, cooperating, and communicating, all under the guidance of the RiverzEdge Arts Project. The lock model has since been featured at the Slater Mill Labor & Ethnic Festival, the CanalFest celebration, and at Footsteps in History venues.

With the help of Corridor Commission funding, Worcester's Canal District Alliance hired students from South High Community



LEFT: Students from South High Community School lead a heritage wagon tour through the streets of Worcester.

RIGHT: Massachusetts Lt. Governor Tim Murray announces \$15 million in new funding for the Blackstone Valley Bikeway.

School to give public tours of the city's Canal District via horse and wagon. The students shared the story of Worcester's great ethnic and industrial diversity to "sold-out" crowds. The program garnered so much interest that in 2011 there will be a second wagon, a second team of students, and an expanded training program.

WELCOMING OUR VISITORS

It was two steps forward, one step back for the Corridor's network of visitor centers in 2010. A step forward was the completion of the Museum of Work and Culture's new "Going to Work" exhibit. The exhibit expands the museum's immigration story up through the 20th century. Another step forward was the start of construction on new exhibits at the Pawtucket Visitor Center, a project scheduled for completion in January 2011. Sadly, the building that was to house the new Worcester Visitor Center was destroyed by arson this year. Undaunted, the City, the Commission, and other partners are formulating alternate plans for providing visitor services in Worcester. The Corridor's visitor centers serve as anchor points for telling the story of the Blackstone Valley. They also serve as launching points for directing visitors to partner sites throughout the region. For more, visit www.blackstonevalleycorridor.org/explore.

DRIVEN BY PARTNERSHIP

A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO PRESERVING OUR HERITAGE

CORRIDOR COMMISSION

Edward Sanderson, *Chair*
Donna Williams, *Vice Chair*
Louise Redding, *Secretary*
Kenneth Bianchi, *Treasurer*
Michael D. Cassidy, *Immediate Past Chair*
Daniel Benoit
Robert Billington
Paula Brouillette
Janet L. Coit
John Dwinell, for Rick Sullivan
Gary Furtado
Richard Gregory
Gaytha Langlois
Patricia Mehrten
Sen. Richard T. Moore
Kevin O'Sullivan
Rep. George N. Peterson
Dennis Rice
Rosemary Scrivens, for Gregory Bialecki
Brona Simon
Burton Stallwood
Keith Stokes

CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION

MA Senator Scott Brown
MA Senator John Kerry
RI Senator Jack Reed
RI Senator Sheldon Whitehouse
MA Congressman James McGovern
MA Congressman Richard Neal
RI Congressman Patrick Kennedy*
RI Congressman James Langevin
**The Commission thanks Congressman Kennedy for his many years of passionate support for the Corridor and welcomes newly-elected Congressman David Cicilline.*

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE STAFF

Jan Reitsma, *Executive Director*
Chuck Arning, *A-V Specialist/Park Ranger*
Ray Boswell, *Park Ranger*
Peter Coffin, *Park Ranger*
Barbara Dixon, *Events Coordinator*
Joanna Doherty, *Community Planner*
Cathryn Henderson, *Agreements Specialist*
Kevin Klyberg, *Park Ranger*
Pauline Lozeau, *Secretary*
John McKinney, *Park Ranger*
Jonathon O'Rourke, *Community Planner*
Valerie Paul, *VIP Coordinator*
Fred Presley, *Community Planner*
Rubby Wuabu, *Student Intern*

FISCAL YEAR 2010 APPROPRIATIONS

The Commission is supported by federal appropriations that leverage substantial local, state and private funds to pursue projects that advance the mission of the National Heritage Corridor and benefit Blackstone Valley communities.

COMMISSION OPERATIONS

\$694,000

Appropriations through the National Recreation and Preservation Portion of the National Park Service budget. Supports Commission operations and administration.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE SUPPORT

\$423,000

Appropriations through the Operation of the National Park Service budget. Provides technical support for education, interpretation, historic preservation, planning and design, and environmental enhancement.

ESTIMATED LEVERAGED RESOURCES

\$1,281,194

Funds and in-kind services provided by local, state, and private sources to match federal funding.

PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS FUNDED IN 2010

Massachusetts Audubon Society	\$ 3,000
Blackstone River Watershed Association	\$ 6,000
City of East Providence	\$ 3,000
Blackstone Valley Historical Society	\$ 3,000
Town of Millbury	\$ 2,210
Grafton Historical Society	\$ 3,000
Canal District Alliance, Inc.	\$ 3,000
Preservation Worcester	\$ 3,000
Waters Farm Preservation Inc.	\$ 2,650
Bay State Trail Riders Association	\$ 3,000
E. Blackstone Quaker Meeting House and Cemetery Historical Association., Inc.	\$ 2,620
CorridorKeepers, Inc.	\$ 5,000
Blackstone River Coalition	\$17,500
ValleyCAST!	\$20,000
RiverzEdge Arts Project	\$19,950
Rhode Island Historical Society	\$13,290
Friends of the Asa Waters Mansion	\$13,750
Friends of Hearthside, Inc.	\$20,000
Daniels Farmstead Foundation, Inc.	\$20,000
Blackstone Valley Education Foundation	\$10,000

In 2010, the Blackstone Valley Paddle Club completed its 10th year in partnership with the Corridor. Each week during the summer, the club invited paddlers to join them in exploring the waterways of the Blackstone River Valley. Paddle Club members, National Park Service rangers, and volunteer naturalists all played roles in leading and interpreting the excursions. During the 2010 season, more than 500 paddlers joined twenty-five volunteers at 15 locations in the Valley.



FOOTSTEPS IN HISTORY

For the month of October, more than 100 historic sites and cultural attractions welcomed visitors to explore and enjoy the Blackstone Valley during the 5th annual Footsteps in History program. The Corridor teamed with the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council and the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce to coordinate the marketing and public relations of the event. National Park Service staff offered special walking tours of historic villages and staffed event booths to help visitors appreciate the overarching story of the Blackstone Valley.

CORRIDOR STAR AWARDS

The Corridor Star Awards recognize individuals or partner organizations that have contributed to the Corridor Commission's mission, goals, projects and programs. We thank the following award winners for their contributions to the Blackstone River Valley • **Thomas Mattson**, Blackstone Valley Tribune; and **Leslie Reichert**, Back Door Vacuum Shop • **Captain Armand Morin**, Retired Woonsocket Fire Chief • **Ellen Carlson**, National Park Service • **Frank Whitehead** and **Jennifer Bartlett**, Wrentham Cable Access-Channel 8 •



GREENWAY CHALLENGE

Perhaps the most spirited demonstration of successful partnership was this year's 10th running of the Blackstone River Valley Greenway Challenge. UniBank returned as the Title Sponsor of the event. Other sponsors included the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, and numerous partners from local communities. A steering committee of volunteers, assisted by Corridor staff, organized the event. Volunteers representing dozens of partner organizations helped in designing the course, staffing the transition sites and working the starting and finish lines. Individuals and teams competed in one of seven divisions: Iron Man, Iron Woman, Championship, Recreational, Masters, All-Women, and Corporate Cup. During the Challenge, crowds of supporters cheered on the 372 athletes as they ran, paddled, and cycled their way over a 59 mile course that showcased the beauty and history of the Blackstone Valley.



MAPLE SUGARING

In 2010, Volunteers-In-Parks from Blackstone Valley Sugaring again hosted Maple Sugar Days at the Blackstone River & Canal Heritage State Park. Attendees got to witness tree-tapping and syrup-gathering. They learned the history and regional significance of syrup-making from local sugar makers and National Park Service staff. Maple Sugar Days attracts an average of 2,500 visitors each year, many coming from outside the Valley.

COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT

Partners from over 40 historical societies, historic sites, museums and libraries attended a Collections Management Workshop hosted by the Corridor Commission in the fall of 2010. Staff from the National Park Service's Museum Services Center provided participants with guidance on how to care for documents, photographs, furniture and other historic objects. The strong turnout speaks to the need for ongoing technical assistance for these organizations and to the value that Blackstone Valley residents place on the expertise of the National Park Service.

INTO HIGH GEAR

RALLYING SUPPORT FOR A NEW NATIONAL PARK

John H. Chafee

BLACKSTONE RIVER VALLEY

National Heritage Corridor Commission



ONE DEPOT SQUARE, WOONSOCKET, RI 02895 • 401-762-0250

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Twenty-five years ago, Congress designated the Blackstone River Valley a National Heritage Corridor, a designation that will last forever. At the same time, Congress established a Commission and authorized it to use federal funding as well as National Park Service staff to undertake the momentous task of preserving the heritage resources of the Corridor. That authorization does not last forever; in fact, it is scheduled to expire in October of 2011.

What happens beyond that is still uncertain. The National Park Service will be submitting its Special Resource Study on the Blackstone Valley to Congress in 2011. The study will confirm that the Blackstone Valley contains resources that tell a nationally significant story about the industrialization of America. It will advise that establishing a new, enduring national park within the Blackstone Valley is both feasible and appropriate. It will recommend which areas of the Valley to include in a new park and how the new park can be managed. It will assure that the new park will embrace the partnership approach that has been so successful for the Corridor these past 25 years.

If legislation to establish a national park is not decided upon by October 2011, Congress or the National Park Service may extend Corridor operations on an interim basis. It would be inefficient to shut operations down only to start them up again if and when the legislation does pass. Yet, given the federal budget problems Congress has to contend with, we cannot take anything for granted. What happens in 2011 will depend in large part on how much public

support there is for a national park in the Blackstone Valley and for an ongoing Heritage Corridor program. Decision-makers will need to hear from those people who know how much difference the National Park Service has already made in the Valley, and how important it is to make the National Park Service presence permanent. If you support historic preservation, river restoration, the bike path, community revitalization, ranger programs, community-based partnerships, volunteerism, or all of the above, 2011 is the year to speak up and have a say in the future of the Valley. For more, visit www.blackstonevalleycorridor.org/getinvolved.

Ted Sanderson, Corridor Commission Chairman

LEADERSHIP FOR THE FUTURE

In May 2010, the Corridor Commission created a not-for-profit corporation called Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, Inc. The purpose of the new organization is to assume the role of the Commission once the Commission's federal authorization has expired. Its primary objectives will be to support heritage partnerships throughout the Blackstone Valley and to pursue federal funding for partnership projects that serve the Corridor mission. If Congress decides to establish a new national park in the Blackstone Valley, the non-profit would assist Valley partners in managing resources and providing programs outside park boundaries, while working with the park toward shared goals. The resolution, bylaws and other information about the new non-profit can be found on the new Corridor website at blackstonevalleycorridor.org.